

All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness

12 December, Committee Room 11, House of Commons



11.20-11.30 - Extraordinary General Meeting

11.30-13.00 - Meeting on meeting on how we can ensure that no one is discharged from public services into homelessness and onto the streets

Attendees:

Bob Blackman MP
Paula Barker MP
Mike Amesbury MP
Lord Young of Cookham
Navendu Mishra MP
Ian Levy MP

Panellists:

Felicity Buchan MP, Minister for Housing and Homelessness
Chris Hicks, Crisis
Pete, Pathway
Dr Amisha Babla
Bridget Young, NACCOM
Zara, NACCOM
Antonia May-Cross, Switchback
Adam, Switchback

Parliamentary staff:

Hattie Shoosmith, Office of Bob Blackman MP
Cello Crompton, Office of Paula Barker MP
Kathryn Summerfield, Office of Ben Everitt MP
Alex Fisher, Office of Mike Amesbury MP
Megan Griggs, Office of Sir Tony Lloyd MP
Chloe Halsted, Office of Lord Best

Secretariat:

Emily Batchelor, Secretariat to APPG

Other:

Rosie Perkins, Crisis
Jasmine Basran, Crisis
Dee O'Connell, Pathway
Alex Bax, Pathway
Emily Page, Pathway
Mandy Pattinson, Pathway
Katie Hawthorn, London Borough of Camden
Lizzi Hearn, National Housing Federation
Samantha Illing, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Sarah Vallis, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Elsie Griffin, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Emily Tester, Peabody
Heather Spurr, Centrepoint
Polly Stephens, New Horizon Youth Centre
Lucy Mowatt, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Eva van der Vliet, Unseen Tours
Rachael Williamson, CIH
Andrew Connell, The Salvation Army
Anna Yassin, Glass Door
Kateya Mbita, Homeless Link
Katy Parker, Connection at St Martins

Welcome and apologies	
Bob Blackman MP	<p>Bob Blackman MP (BB) opens the EGM by introducing himself and briefly outlining the format of the EGM.</p> <p>BB chairs the EGM and oversees the election of Paula Barker MP (PB) as Co-Chair and Lord Best (LB) as Vice-Chair/Officer.</p> <p>BB notes the APPGEH will hold another EGM to elect a fourth officer before the deadline of 31st March 2024.</p> <p>BB then concludes the EGM and invites external attendees to join the meeting.</p> <p>BB welcomes PB, PB introduces herself, BB introduces the Minister Felicity Buchan (FB) MP and invites her to speak.</p>
Felicity Buchan MP	<p>FB reiterated the Government's commitment to tackling rough sleeping and the importance of this being a cross-departmental effort.</p> <p>FB outlined the Autumn Statement's measures to help millions of households including uplifting LHA rates.</p> <p>FB said that circumstances were challenging and there had been an uptake in rough sleeping numbers.</p> <p>FB said she was working closely with her colleagues across Government and that 'no-one should be released from hospital onto the streets.'</p> <p>FB said ending the homelessness of people leaving prison was also a priority.</p> <p>FB said she was having close discussions with the Home Office (HO) and said the Government was very committed to reducing the backlog of asylum seeker decisions.</p> <p>FB outlined that no one will be asked to leave HO accommodation during the Christmas period and three days of SWEP being triggered.</p> <p>FB then took questions from the audience on funding getting to the frontline, evidence that asylum seekers are effectively being given 7 days' notice to leave HO accommodation and support for veterans facing homelessness.</p>
Paula Barker MP	<p>PB made opening remarks including the trauma of experiencing homelessness and the importance of trauma-informed approaches. PB outlined how important cross-departmental approaches were to ending homelessness and how departments tended to work in siloes. PB said there should be efforts all year round to end homelessness not just when there are low temperatures.</p>
<p>Chris Hicks, Crisis</p> <p>Dr Amisha Babla, Pathway</p> <p>Pete, Pathway</p>	<p>CH outlined how homelessness is a health issue and that on average someone experiencing homelessness has 7 health conditions.</p> <p>CH outlined Crisis' new report with Pathway which looks at the Homelessness Reduction Act 5 years on from implementation, specifically, on its prevention focus and the Duty to Refer. CB said the overall finding was that the intention of the Duty to Refer was the right one, but adherence is patchy and varies significantly across the country.</p> <p>CB said the report recommended:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better integration is vital - Housing Officers must be embedded into hospital settings - Specialist homeless health care teams are hugely impactful and must be scaled up <p>AB outlined what inclusion health means - maximum support around the patient to ensure they don't return to homelessness.</p> <p>AB described that her team was set up in June last year and reduced the number of patients without a fixed abode from 36% on admission to 13% on discharge.</p> <p>AB outlined that where they couldn't prevent discharge onto the streets it was mostly patients with NRPF who are impossible to find accommodation for.</p> <p>AB recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All hospitals need an inclusion health team - Urgently need ring fenced funding for step down beds - Better supply of homes <p>P outlined his own experiences of being homeless and how he felt let down by services he came into contact with. He described how he came out of prison with no roof under his head and then fell into a cycle of homelessness. He described himself as fortunate to get out of the cycle, and says there has to be change.</p>
<p>Bridget Young and Zara, NACCOM</p>	<p>BY outlined the work of NACCOM to end the homelessness amongst asylum seekers, refugees and those with NRPF.</p> <p>BY outlined how they face homelessness due to many factors including lack of legal advice, lack of NRPF, lack of information and support and increasingly evictions from HO accommodation.</p> <p>BY described that from their yearly survey with members a key theme was an increase in refugees being provided either positive or negative decisions ending up sleeping rough.</p> <p>BY said there is a perfect storm for this change caused by HO changes made without consultation, a cost of living crisis and a lack of affordable housing.</p> <p>BY said that discharging people onto the street is not just traumatising for people but also for staff and is used only as a last resort.</p> <p>Z said she had been working with NACCOM for 2 years including working with Homeless Link and with the APPG on Migration.</p> <p>Z outlined that people are facing homelessness regardless of their asylum decision as there is a broken system. Z said there is also lack of awareness about how the system works, and a lack of support, which results in a cliff edge. Z outlines that homelessness becomes an additional trauma for people who may be seeking to leave trauma behind.</p> <p>BY outlines key recommendations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extending the duty to refer to the Home Office - Ensuring that refugees have all of their documentation at once - Stop evictions from HO evictions during low temperatures, at the very least in SWEP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-departmental efforts to end homelessness
Antonia May Cross and Adam, Switchback	<p>AMC outlines how 80% of crime is reoffending, and that 52% more likely to commit a crime if you don't have stable housing. AMC outlined the potential for savings of £18bn if housing is provided and re-offending is reduced.</p> <p>AMC outlined how Switchbacks members need a stable fixed address to make them feel most safe, the 10 weeks of interim accommodation provided is scarce and not accessible for all.</p> <p>AMC recommended a National Resettlement Framework to ensure that prison leavers can access stable housing on release.</p> <p>A outlined his own experiences of growing up, homelessness and being in prison.</p> <p>A explained how difficult it was accessing mental health services inside and outside of prison – calling it 'non-existent.'</p> <p>A emphasised the importance of support when leaving prison and that all of us are human beings.</p>
Questions to panellists	<p>PB then opened up the Q&A session with attendees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Question on whether statistics on discharge include the provision of temporary accommodation. <p>AB said that normally they are discharged to local authority emergency accommodation, and those with NRPF are discharged into hostels or night shelters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Question on how we can change the attitude of the health system <p>AB said that the Pathway team puts in robust support for patients we are looking after, which breaks down the siloes.</p> <p>There is currently a 18month waiting list for mental health treatment and we need to prioritise them</p> <p>CH outlines how homelessness and health is marginalised within the NHS and that 78,000 people visited hospital with no fixed abode.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Question on the work of the Public Accounts Committee, highlighting that savings from prevention activity should be of note. <p>PB said that she was appointed to the PAC and would flag the issue.</p>
Bob Blackman MP and Paula Barker MP	<p>BB made remarks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of the HRA working effectively in practice - Need for better cross-departmental collaboration - The importance of support on discharge <p>BB reiterated the call for a roundtable with ministers across departments.</p> <p>PB emphasised the importance of Housing First and hope and giving people a future.</p>
Actions and deadlines	Secretariat to send around minutes to attendees and Chair.